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RARE EDWIN PRINTS.

BY MANTLE FIELDING.

Two engraved portraits by David Edwin have recently come under my notice that are not only extremely rare, but as far as can now be ascertained are practically unique. In one instance only an unlettered impression, printed on satin is known, and the print here described is the first impression that has appeared printed on paper, with the engraver's name. In the second instance, the portrait is unknown to any collector of Edwin's work.

It is surprising that only one copy of these plates should have survived until our time; and when it is considered that one of the portraits is an engraving of George Washington, it is of added interest. The collector naturally turns to his catalogues of the engraved portraits of Washington, by William S. Baker, published 1880, and to the work by Charles Henry Hart, published by the Grolier Club 1904; also to the catalogues of the collections formed by Hon. Hampton L. Carson, and Hon. James T. Mitchell. The engraving seems however to have eluded all these collectors, with the exception of the unlettered impression printed on satin, referred to as the work of an unknown engraver in Baker 391, and Hart 273. In the "Catalogue of the Engraved Work of David Edwin," which I published in 1905, mention is made of a beautiful little set of portraits published by T. B. Freeman, Philadelphia in 1798, comprising as far as known, Mr. John Kemble, Mrs. Merry, Mr. J. E. Harwood, and Mr. John Bernard. All of these portraits are now extremely scarce; of the Bernard portrait, only three copies are known to exist, and one of these is cut close. Of the Harwood portrait, we have only restrikes from the original plate; and it is safe to say an original is unknown, as the great collection of theatrical portraits

formed by the late Augustin Daly of New York, and which he was thirty years in collecting, had only the modern restrike. This portrait of Washington seems to be similar to the other portraits of this set, resembling it in general appearance, and in size, and lettering. The engraving also resembles in general description and measurement Baker No. 208, and Hart No. 359, but in comparison with this print, Hart No. 359 shows the well-known Stuart type, while the print in question differs from it in the general arrangement, being from the Birch type. The following is the complete description noted from the print. Unfortunately it is not a perfect copy as it has been somewhat cut down.

WASHINGTON, GEORGE.

(William Birch type.)

Full bust, to left. Oval with border line 2/16″. T. B. Freeman Excudit— D. Edwin Sculpt/

The second print is a folio portrait of Alexander Ist. This is a very interesting example of Edwin's work. It was published in Philadelphia 18—, there does not seem to be any other copy known among the collections. The following is a description as noted from the print.

ALEXANDER I. OF RUSSIA.

Bust in uniform, to left. "L^{is} de St Aubin del—D. Edwin Sculp^{t}/ Alexander/ Emperor and Autocrate of all the Russias/ Philadelphia. Publish'd Oct. 6th. 1814 N°. 72 Chesnut Street/ Hight 5.12/16″ Width 4.6/16″. Vignette without background.